THE

PREFACE.

Tartary, *and the* North-East *of* China, *being parts of*
Asia, *the leaſt known and hitherto the moſt fabulouſly de-*
ſcribed, I conceiv'd it would not be unpleaſing to the Curious in
England, *to be furniſht with the Tranſlation of two Letters*
publiſhed lately at Paris, *which give a conſiderable Information*
concerning the preſent State of them. The Publiſher Dedicat-
ed them to the French *King, and affirms them to be the Letters*
of the Famous Father Verbieſt, *who is one of the* 3 *Fathers*
(*viz.* Ludovicus Buglius, Gabriel Magellanus, *and* Ferdinan-
dus Verbieſt) *that were left at* Pekin *to Sollicite the cauſe of*
Chriſtianity, and who by his great Skill in Mathematick *Learn-*
ing obtained acceſs to that Emperour, *and thereby many Fa-*
vours for himſelf and the other Miſſionaries; As appears by a
Book Printed in the Chineſe *and* Latine *Character in* Quam
Cheu *the* Metropolis *of the Province of* Quam tum *in* China
Anno 1671.

But *one Reaſon more of Printing this Tranſlate was to mani-*
feſt by Experience, the great uſe of Mathematical *Knowledge,*
which, by theſe you will perceive highly eſteemed in Countries where
'tis more difficult to be obtained than here, ſo that when no other
means could procure entrance upon the ſkirts of that vaſt Empire
of China, *this alone has got admittance into the* Metropolis *of*
the whole Empire, *nay, into the Palace and Preſence of the* Em-
perour, *with the practical parts of which knowledge, you will here*
find Him delighted and even captivated; And that this Learn-
ed Father, judges it the moſt effectual means to inſinuate into the
Minds alſo, of the moſt rude and ignorant (of all other things and
parts of the World, but what their own Country affords) in or-
der to propagate the Chriſtian Religion. I ſhall not now add as a
Confirmation of this Opinion, what to this effect we have long ſince
been

been informed of by the Hiſtorical *Relations about* China, *but on-*
ly take notice that beſides this uſe, theſe Letters will give another,
viz. *Several Curious* Mathematical *and* Phyſical *Obſervations*
there made by the Author, who it ſeems well underſtood what
would be beneficial to Europe as well as pleaſing to the Chineſe.
To men ſo qualified with Mathematical *knowledge, we owe the*
Diſcovery, of the before, unknown parts of the World, and from
ſuch we are to hope for the perfeƈtion of that knowledge, and the
Diſcovery of the reſt. I have upon this occaſion added ſome inqui-
ries concerning the Literature of that Country, they are but con-
jeƈtures, grounded upon the peruſal of ſome of their Books. A full
Diſcovery is not pretended, however I hope they may ſerve as
hints and incitements to others, who have better ability and other
advantages to compleat it. We have hitherto not been admitted
to the Skirts, but this Diſcovery when perfeƈted, will lay open to us
an Empire *of Learning, hitherto only fabulouſly deſcribed; This*
will admit us to converſe with the beſt and greateſt of that Empire,
that either are or ever have been; This will Diſcover a new In-
dian *Mine and Treaſure, and make a new trade to bring it hi-*
ther, which may not be unworthy the conſideration of our Honou-
rable Eaſt-India-Company, *As well as of ſeveral Learned Men,*
who have leiſure, and other opportunities to make further Pro-
greſs in this Inquiry; To promote which, if theſe find acceptance,
I ſhall add ſome further obſervations, together with the publication
of one piece of their Philoſophy, which is printed in their own
Charaƈter, with the pronunciation and interpretation in Latin;
which may ſupply a fit Subjeƈt for the Curious to praƈtice upon, and
give a taſte of the Philoſophy and of the manner of Expreſſion
in that Remote Part of the World. To theſe I have added
the figure of the Roman Abacus. *Which queſtionleſs was*
the Ground of the ſignification of figures according to places.
As alſo that of the Chineſe *in the Diƈtionary of the Court Lan-*
guage, differing from that of Martinius *deſcribed in the firſt*
Decad of his Chineſe *Hiſtory,* 1ſt. *in that the Dignity of the*
places here aſcend from the Left to the Right; contrary to what he
ſays of his: and 2ly. *In that this has one head only for the fifth*
or 6th. *And his hath two.*   A